

X.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

We have received the following letters addressed to the Editors of 'The Ibis:'—

SIRS,—A Greenland Falcon (*Falco candicans*) was shot in the neighbourhood of Lewes on the 26th inst. The bird passed into the hands of Mr. Monk, of that town, and was taken to Mr. Swaysland to be preserved and set up. It was a very fine specimen, of the female sex, in the snowy-white plumage, speckled on the back, wings, and tail with brownish black; measured 52 inches across the wings, and weighed no less than 3 pounds 11 ounces. It had scarcely completed its autumnal moult, some of the new feathers having not attained their full length. I have had the pleasure of handling this *rara avis* in the flesh, through the kindness of Mr. Swaysland, who had just commenced skinning it.

It is a curious coincidence that rather more than three months ago, as I am informed, one of Mr. Swaysland's sons, who was at Lyme Regis, distinctly recognized a Falcon in similar plumage, when out walking with a friend on Sunday, 11th June. He wrote to his father at Brighton for his gun and licence, set traps for it, but never saw it again. A strange white bird was also seen lately about the Brighton coast, and is said to have been fired at on the 1st September. There can be little doubt that these statements all refer to the same bird.

Yours &c.,

CHAS. A. WRIGHT.

Brighton, 27th Sept., 1882.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing I have seen a letter from Mr. Swaysland's son Henry to his mother, dated Rousdon, 28th Sept., in which he gives some further particulars of the circumstances respecting his meeting with the Falcon above alluded to. He says he was out with a friend on the 11th June, down the landslip, when a bird flew up, and then went down a steep place and up the other side. He exclaimed, "That is a rare Gull; it has not any black tips to its wings; it must be an Iceland Gull. Keep quiet; we will go and look over and see if we can see it again." On

looking towards the other side of the cliff, about sixty yards off, where the landslip is, Henry said, "It is a Falcon; look! it's sitting straight upright." The letter then goes on to say that he had a good look at it with his field-glass: "The bird was sitting on a stone looking at us; it seemed quite white, except the tail. Had I gone to the other side of the landslip, I could have approached within ten yards of it. But I left, and went about two miles to the keeper's house, and told him I would give him a pound if he would let me shoot it, or, if he would shoot it, I would give him the same amount. I put down four traps baited with young rabbits. Two days after, on the 13th June, it was seen at Seaton to strike a tame Pigeon close to a man; it dropped the Pigeon, which was dead. Several persons saw it during the week. It was last seen at Lyme Regis, Dorset."

C. A. W.

Brighton, Oct. 5.

Clitheroe, September 1882.

SIRS,—I have been for some years working at the Birds of Lancashire, and am anxious to make the list as complete as possible. The value of local lists of birds is generally recognized; and I need not, therefore, apologize for attempting to bring together in a collected form, up to the present date, the ornithological knowledge of my native county.

Lancashire ornithologists, though numerous and intelligent, have, unfortunately, seldom published their observations; and the quantity of material ready to hand is much smaller than is possessed by some other counties. Thus, to make the work complete, it is the more necessary to have full information from those acquainted with every district.

If any of your correspondents are able to assist me, I shall be pleased to furnish them, on application, with the particulars on which I desire information.

Yours &c.,

F. S. MITCHELL.

SIRS,—The paper on a collection of birds made on the river Yang-tze-kiang by the Rev. H. H. Slater, in the July

number of 'The Ibis' (1882, pp. 431-436), though it does not add any new species to the Chinese list, is an interesting contribution to the geographical distribution of birds in China. It is, however, a pity that a collection of birds from a country of which much must necessarily remain unknown, in spite of of the researches of Swinhoe and Père David, should not have been submitted to a competent ornithologist for identification before the list was published. The three examples alledged to be *Monticola saxatilis* are undoubtedly *Monticola cyanus-solitaria*; and the specimen of *Larus occidentalis* is, no doubt, *Larus cachinnans*, of which *L. leucophæus* is a synonym, and which is by no means out of its range in the interior of China. If the colour of the mantle is really the same as that of *L. argentatus*, which is difficult of belief, it would be a very extraordinary fact. *L. occidentalis* is almost as dark as *L. fuscus*, and also resembles that bird in the pattern of its primaries; but I am not aware that it has ever occurred in the eastern hemisphere.

Yours &c.,

HENRY SEEBOHM.

22 Courtfield Gardens, S.W.

October 10th, 1882.

22 Courtfield Gardens, Cromwell Road,
December 8, 1882.

SIRS,—There is an old proverb which says that "prevention is better than cure." In the fifth volume of the 'Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum' I have done my best to *cure* some of the confusion caused by the ill-judged attempts of Messrs. Newton, Sharpe, and Dresser to carry out the Stricklandian code regardless of consequences. The object of the present letter is to try to *prevent* further confusion by pointing out a few of the rocks ahead on which these gentlemen must rush if they persist in their present course.

Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the genus in which the Rough-legged Buzzard ought to be placed, all ornithologists agree that the specific name must be *lagopus*. This name cannot, however, stand according to the Stricklandian code. Messrs. Newton, Dresser, and Sharpe all refer

to *Falco lagopus* of Gmelin (Syst. Nat. i. p. 260), which dates from 1788, altogether ignoring the *Falco norvegicus* of Latham (Gen. Syn. Suppl. i. p. 282), which dates from 1787. Both these names are founded upon the Rough-legged Falcon of Latham (Gen. Syn. i. p. 75); and if the Utopian law of priority is to be observed, the specific name of *norvegicus* must be substituted for that of *lagopus*, which dates later by a year.

Messrs. Newton, Sharpe, and Dresser also agree in giving to the Greenland Falcon the specific name of *candicans*, which they date from 1788 (Gmel. Syst. Nat. i. p. 275). This name is founded on the White Jer-Falcon of Latham (Gen. Syn. i. p. 83), as is also the *Falco islandus* of Latham (Gen. Syn. Suppl. i. p. 282), which dates from 1787. Latham afterwards (Ind. Orn. i. p. 32) altered the name to *Falco islandicus*. Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser both include this name under the synonyms of *Falco candicans*, but ignore the earlier name, either because it escaped their attention, or because they were afraid to alter a name which had received the sanction of so high an authority as Professor Newton, the Stricklandian code notwithstanding.

No book has been the cause of more confusion in nomenclature than Boddaert's Table of the 'Planches Enluminées' of Daubenton. Familiar names of long standing have been abandoned by the three ornithologists I have named, and new names have been raked up from this deservedly forgotten pamphlet, causing great annoyance to other ornithologists who are anxious to further the real study of birds, without hindrance from the pedantic alterations of unnecessary synonymy. All this confusion has been perpetrated in the name of the British Association in obedience to the law of priority.

Another book has now been unearthed from obscurity, published by Gerini in 1767 (Orn. Meth. Dig.)*. *Accipiter*

* Ornithologia Methodice Digesta atque Iconibus Aeneis ad vivum illuminatis ornata. Tomus Primus. Ad regiam celsitudinem serenissimi Petri Leopoldi, Regii Principis Hungariæ ac Bohemiæ, Archiducis Austriæ, Magni Ducis Etruriæ &c. &c. &c. Florentiæ, anno mdccclxvii. In Ædibus Mouchianis cum facultate Præsidum. Fol.

merillus (op. cit. i. p. 51, pls. xviii. & xix.) antedates the name in present use for the Merlin. *Bubo maximus* (op. cit. i. p. 84, pl. lxxxi.) closes the discussion between Prof. Newton and Dr. Selater as to the name of the Great Horned Owl in favour of the latter disputant. The authority of Gerini to give binomial names may be disputed on the ground that he is not always binomial; but exactly the same remark applies to Boddaert. To say nothing of numerous non-binomial names quoted by him from Brisson, we find "*Fringilla dominicana cristata*, mihi" (op. cit. p. 7, no. 103), "*Columba turtur viridis*, mihi" (op. cit. p. 11, no. 177), "*Alcedo viridis rufa*, mihi" (op. cit. p. 36, no. 592), &c. It seems to me that sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and that the names of Gerini and Boddaert must either both stand or both fall. Either the new names to be found in Gerini must be introduced, or the names already adopted from Boddaert must be expunged.

Surely it is time that a stop was put to any further attempts to carry out the law of priority. Where is it all to end?

The object of the Stricklandian code was to introduce uniformity. In this it has miserably failed. To take a single example, let us see what the honest attempt to carry out the law of priority has done towards introducing uniformity in the name of the Lesser Spotted Eagle. A large majority of ornithologists have called and, I am glad to say, still call this interesting bird *Aquila nævia*. Prof. Newton, who admits that he tries to carry out the law of priority regardless of consequences, calls it *Aquila nævia*. I am delighted to find that, for once, we agree upon a disputed point of nomenclature. But Sharpe is equally anxious to carry out the law of priority to the bitter end; and he calls the bird *Aquila maculata*. Dresser, who tries to outherod Herod in his blind devotion to the Stricklandian code, calls the bird *Aquila pomarina*, whilst Gurney, equally anxious to obey the law of priority, calls it *Aquila rufonuchalis*! Where is the uniformity of nomenclature that the Stricklandian code was to have produced? It makes confusion worse confounded; and the sooner the law of priority is consigned to the moles

and the bats, before it has done more mischief among the birds, the better for the study of ornithology.

Yours &c.,

HENRY SEEBOHM.

St. Michael's on Wyre,
Garstang, Lancashire.

SIRS,—The few following notes were taken during a short travel through the Desert of Sinai last spring; and the only reason of my sending them to you is that the species referred to were either not observed by Mr. Wyatt (*vide* Ibis, 1870, p. 1) or were noticed by him rarely.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE. *Lanius pomeranus*.

Two or three birds of this species were seen by me on March 17 in the oasis of Feiran.

MASKED SHRIKE. *Lanius nubicus*.

I saw a single bird of this species on March 27 near our first encampment after leaving the Fortress of Nukhl, on our way north to Gaza.

BLUE THRUSH. *Monticola cyanus*.

We noticed several of these birds at the head of Wady Lejá on our way up Jebel Katareena on March 18.

CURVED-BILL LARK. *Certhilauda alaudipes*.

A pair of these birds attracted my attention on March 23, just on entering the Desert of Tih.

Yours &c.,

HUGH P. HORNBY.

5 East View, Leeds.

December 7, 1882.

SIRS,—Permit me, through the medium of 'The Ibis,' to direct the attention of ornithologists to what I conceive is a desideratum in the literature of our science—namely, a volume treating of the study of birds generally, which shall be on the one hand comprehensive and strictly scientific, and on the other sufficiently readable for the use of the average man of culture who is not specially an ornithologist. Such a manual

of ornithology should contain a preliminary sketch or *résumé* of the history and literature of the subject, followed by chapters dealing with (1) the external characters of birds, (2) their osteology, myology, and internal characters generally, (3) their distribution in time, (4) the broad outlines of their distribution in space, (5) their migrations, and (6), lastly, their classification. The last part, which should form the bulk of the work, should include a systematic description of the characters and distribution of the various subclasses, orders, families, and genera.

Such a work, worthily and adequately done, would furnish in a compendious form much information now scattered and inaccessible to most men, from the cost or scarcity of the works in which it is contained, such works including the innumerable Transactions and Journals devoted to zoological science. A compendium of the description I contemplate would be indispensable to the library of every ornithologist, whatever his standing may be, and would, I venture to surmise, be esteemed a boon.

In order to put my suggestion on a sound and practical basis, and make perfectly clear my ideas as to the exact nature and extent of the desideratum, I will mention a work, recently published, which, to my mind, is a perfect model of its kind, supplying this want most precisely and in an admirable manner to another class of vertebrates. I refer to Dr. Günther's '*Study of Fishes*,' a book the value of which, from practical experience, I find it impossible to overestimate, and which, in fact, perfectly embodies the ideal of what a work of the kind should be. For the information of those who may be unacquainted with it, I may state that it is a moderately large volume of about 750 octavo pages, well got up, amply illustrated by woodcuts, and sold for twenty-four shillings.

The production of such a work for the Aves can only be undertaken satisfactorily by a first-rate ornithologist, well versed in every department of the science; and I believe that in the hands of a specialist, on the one hand, or of a compiler, on the other, the result would be a failure, or, at all events, a disappointment. And surely the preparation of such a

truly useful work would not be a waste of the time of any ornithologist of the standing required.

But high as the requirements are, there can be no hesitation in declaring that the B. O. U. includes members who could realize them worthily.

In conclusion I would remark that, if ichthyology, with its comparatively few votaries, can command such a work, it is fair to presume that if ornithology possessed a similar one it would prove more than a success.

Yours &c.,

WM. EAGLE CLARKE.

Proceedings of the Anniversary Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union, 1882.

The Annual Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Union was held at 6 Tenterdon Street, Hanover Square, on May 17th, 1882, Mr. P. L. Slater in the chair. The following Members were present:—P. L. Slater, Osbert Salvin, G. C. Taylor, W. A. Forbes, H. E. Dresser, E. C. Taylor, Edward H. Cooper, C. Bygrave Wharton, F. S. Mitchell, H. Gadow, J. Young, Henry T. Wharton, Howard Saunders, J. E. Harting, Frank B. Simson, H. B. Tristram, C. G. Danford, Edward Hargitt, H. Evelyn Rawson, Charles A. Wright, T. Southwell, G. E. Shelley, William Borrer, and W. B. Tegetmeier.

The minutes of the last Meeting, held May 18th, 1881, having been read and confirmed, the accounts relating to the Volume of 'The Ibis' for 1881, a copy of which had been sent to every Member in the United Kingdom, were discussed and passed.

The following Candidates were then balloted for and elected Members of the B. O. U.:—Robert William Chase, Southfield, Edgbaston, Birmingham; Charles B. Cory, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, U. S. A.; Philip Crowley, Waddon House, Croydon; Philip M. Kermode, Seabridge Cottage, Ramsay, Isle of Man; Rev. Edw. Ponsonby Knubley, M.A., Stavely Rectory, Boroughbridge, Leeds; Thomas Hudson Nelson,

North Bondgate, Bishop Auckland, Durham, and Redcar, Yorkshire; Eugene William Oates, 6 Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, W.; Rev. Henry H. Slater, M.A., F.Z.S., Sharrow, Ripon, Yorkshire; and Major Charles Swinhoe, Bombay Staff Cops, Commissariat Department, Bombay.

Mr. Salvin announced that the Fourth Series of 'The Ibis' would be completed with the Volume for 1882, and that he did not propose to offer himself for reelection as one of the Editors of a new Series. Mr. Godman intimated his wish to resign the Secretaryship.

The following Officers were then elected:—

Lord Lilford		<i>President.</i>
Mr. H. E. Dresser		<i>Secretary.</i>
Mr. P. L. Slater	}	<i>Editors.</i>
Mr. Howard Saunders		

Mr. Salvin was elected a member of the Committee in the place of Col. Godwin-Austen, and Capt. E. Shelley in the place of Mr. Saunders.

Mr. H. T. Wharton gave a short account of the progress of the Committee appointed to prepare a List of British Birds.

The Meeting then proceeded to the consideration of Mr. Harvie-Brown's resolution—

“That the day of Meeting and of the Dinner be changed from May to the third week in February or first week in March,”

and Mr. Howard Saunders's amendment—

“That the day of Meeting and of the Dinner be on the Wednesday after the Derby.”

Both the resolution and amendment having been seconded, the latter was put to the Meeting and lost, and the former was also lost. The rule as to the day of the General Meeting of the B. O. U. therefore remains unaltered.

The Meeting then adjourned to attend the Anniversary Dinner.

Mr. Forbes's Zoological Expedition up the Niger.—Mr. W. A. Forbes writes from Lokoja, on the Niger, at the confluence with the Binué (September 9th), as follows:—

“I have been here, on and off, about a fortnight, and have been up the Binué as far as Loko, about 100 miles, where I got some birds. All together, up to the present, I have seen or got about 80 species of birds, including examples of *Scopus*, *Plotus*, *Indicator*, and *Rhynchops*; as yet no *Podica*, *Irrisor*, or *Musophagidæ*.

“Of Hornbills I have seen three or four species; but they are very shy, and as yet I have not shot one. Ploceine birds are the feature here: about one third of the species are of that family; and some I have are good ones, especially *Estrellda nigricollis* and *E. rara*, both of them discovered by Heuglin. These and other things make me fancy that we are out of the true West-African region here; the antelopes seem also eastern. There are four or five here, including a brown *Hippotragus*, and what I fancy is *Alcelaphus tora*. I have skins and horns of these, and shall get others. *Bos brachyceros* is common here; but as yet I have only seen spoor, not the beast itself. We saw lots of Hippopotamuses coming up; and I killed the second I shot at, but could not recover the body.

“I have also killed a large crocodile, 15 feet long, apparently *Crocodilus acutus*. I have also a few fishes and reptiles, and shall get more, I hope. Butterflies are not very numerous at present; the country is too open for them, being, generally speaking, a large grassy plain, with lots of isolated trees not very big, and bushes. There is no regular thick forest up here at all; and even in the lower river, in the delta, it is nothing like the neotropical forests. The weather has been very dry, and the river is still rising. After leaving Bidida our plans are uncertain. Mr. M. talks of going on to Sokoto, if he can get away from his stock-taking; and if he goes, I shall probably go too. If not, I shall try and stay some time at Ischungu, a station a little off the river above Egga.”

We are happy to be able to add that Mr. Forbes was in excellent health at the date of his letter.

A more recent letter from Mr. Forbes (dated Egga, September 17th) announces that he had determined to leave about the end of September for an excursion up to Sokoto, which would take about six weeks, after which he would probably return straight to England. In the meanwhile Mr. Forbes had selected Ischungu, on a creek a little above Egga, as a good collecting-station for birds and fishes, and intended to pass the intervening time there. "*Glareola cinerea* is very common on the sandbanks about Egga, and is met with in large flocks. *Pluvianus ægyptius* and a species of *Metopidius* are likewise plentiful."

Proceedings of Foreign Collectors.—Herr Stolzmann (of Warsaw) having convinced himself that nothing can be done in Peru in the present state of the country, has gone to Ecuador, and is exploring the hot forests on the Pacific seaboard of that country. His present station is Chimbo, at an altitude of 1100 feet, where he has obtained many interesting birds. M. Taczanowski is expected very shortly on a visit to this country for the purpose of working out Herr Stolzmann's collections, amongst which are examples of many species believed to be new to science.

Mr. Henry Whitely returned to London last September with a very fine and large series of bird-skins from the Roraima district of Guiana. Messrs. Salvin and Godman, who have had the first selection, promise us an account of the novelties for our next issue.

Mr. R. Parkinson writes to us from Apia, Samoa, that he is about to proceed to New Britain on a collecting-expedition. Mr. Parkinson will also endeavour to visit New Hanover and the north-east coast of New Guinea. His address is "Moko, Duke-of-York Islands, c. o. the German Consulate, Sydney, N. S. W." There is, no doubt, still a rich harvest to be reaped in these islands by an energetic collector.

The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution writes that they are sending Mr. Nutting, an excellent field-naturalist, to the eastern coast of Central America, to collect from Nicaragua up to Honduras. Dr. Stejneger, who went to Behring

Island, in the North Pacific, last spring, has already sent home a large series of birds, some of which are of great interest.

Mr. H. O. Forbes, who has been for some time making collections in the East-Indian Islands, has just returned to Amboina from a short trip to Timor-laut, which has been carried out principally by means of funds voted in aid of this particular expedition by the British Association. Mr. Forbes's chief collections on this occasion consist of plants and birds. Of the former, according to the decision of the Timor-laut Committee of the British Association, the first set is to be deposited in the Kew Herbarium, of the latter the first set will go to the British Museum. But steps will be taken, we believe, to ensure the immediate publication of Mr. Forbes's discoveries, which, in the case of the birds at least, are likely to be of special interest, the avifauna of Timor-laut being quite unknown.

New Works in Preparation.—We are glad to be able to announce that Canon Tristram's long projected Synopsis of the Fauna and Flora of Palestine will at length appear as a volume of the Reports of the Association for the Exploration of the Holy Land. It will include, of course, a memoir on the birds, to which our excellent fellow-worker has devoted, as we all know, special attention.

We are also much pleased to hear that Mr. W. H. Blandford is likely to be shortly employed on the editorship of a series of handbooks on the zoology of India. This must, of course, include a new work on the birds, Jerdon's volumes, excellent at their time, being now quite out of date.

Two volumes of the British Museum Catalogue of Birds are, we have good reason to believe, in a forward state, and likely to appear in the course of a few months. In one of these Mr. Sharpe will continue and, we believe, complete his account of the great and varied group of Timeliidæ. Another volume, prepared by Dr. Gadow, will contain the Laniidæ, Vireonidæ, Paridæ, Nectariniidæ, and Meliphagidæ. After this the progress of the Catalogue will perhaps be somewhat delayed by the transfer of the zoological collections

to the new building in South Kensington, which is already begun, and will probably be finished during the present year. But we believe that arrangements are being made for the early commencement of future volumes of this important undertaking.

Mr. Dresser's Monograph of the Bee-eaters (Meropidæ) is, we are told, making good progress, the plates being all drawn on the stone.

Discovery of a new Bird of Paradise.—In a box of birdskins just received from Mr. Andrew Goldie are specimens of a fine new Bird of Paradise, which were obtained in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, off the coast of New Guinea. We propose to give a full description and figure of it in the next number of 'The Ibis.' In the meantime the following diagnosis will serve to distinguish it:—

PARADISEA DECORA.

- ♂. Supra sericeo-straminea, alis caudaque fuscis, rectricibus mediis elongatis filiformibus, sicut ut in *P. apoda*; fronte anguste et gula viridescentibus; subtus lilacina vinaceo tincta, pectore saturatiore, abdomine medio albicantiore; plumis hypochondriacis posticis ruberrimis, apicibus canescentibus, forma sicut in *P. sanguinea*, anticis brevibus, apicibus lætissime saturate vinaceis. Statura *P. raggiane*. ♀ inornata; subtus gula fusca, abdomine rufo-fusco, pectore fusco irrorato.

O. SALVIN and F. D. GODMAN.

Obituary—Prof. Reinhardt.—We are sorry to record the death of Professor JOHANNES THEODOR REINHARDT, one of the original Honorary Members of the B. O. U., which took place after a tedious illness on the 22nd of October last. The son of Johannes Hagemann Reinhardt, Professor of Zoology in the University of Copenhagen (who died in 1845), our late member was born in that city in 1816, and at first applied himself to the study of medicine. His earliest publication was on ornithology, being a brief notice (Naturhistorisk Tidsskrift, iv. p. 71) of the discovery

by him, in 1840, of the long-forgotten Dodo's head among various "Naturalier" which had been recently transferred from the old Gottorp Museum to that of Copenhagen. In 1845 he sailed as a naturalist in the Danish corvette 'Galathea' on a voyage round the world, proceeding first to the Nicobar Islands (then belonging to Denmark), thence to India, China, and South America, arriving at Rio de Janeiro in 1847. Here orders awaited him to visit the bone-caves of Lagoa Santa, so celebrated for the collections made there by Lund, which, during Reinhardt's absence, had been transmitted to Copenhagen. To his native city he returned in 1848, and was appointed Inspector of the Zoological Museum, a position which, as well as that of Curator of the Lund Collection, and titular Professor of Zoology in the University, he held till his death. He subsequently twice revisited Brazil, namely in 1850-52 and in 1854-56. A list of Reinhardt's many zoological publications, up to 1875 inclusive, is given in Herr C. C. A. Gosch's* 'Udsigt over Danmark's Zoologiske Literatur' (iii. pp. 423-439), which is the more needed since, in the well-known Bibliographia of Carus and Engelmann, no distinction is made between the writings of the two Reinhardts, father and son. Our own readers have had several opportunities of becoming acquainted with some of the latter's labours; but that by which he will always be celebrated in ornithology is his having been the first to recognize the now fully admitted Columbine affinity of the Dodo. Of this he had already fully satisfied himself in 1843, as is proved by a letter he addressed in that year to Sundevall, who printed an extract from it in his 'Berättelse om Framstegen i vertebrerade Djurens Naturalhistoria och Ethnografien under åren 1845-1850' (p. 245, note). Reinhardt's extensive information, which he was always so ready to impart, and his unassuming manner made him greatly liked by all with whom he came into contact; and his death is regretted by a large circle of friends in his own country and by many abroad.

* The writer of this notice has to express gratefully his indebtedness to Herr Gosch for most of the particulars above given of Reinhardt's career.